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AUTHOR Lutzker, Marilyn
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ABSTRACT

A library research strategy for part-time undergraduate students which attempts to make efficient use of small segments of time by dividing the research process into separate steps which do not have to be done at the same time, in sequence, or at the same library is outlined in this pamphlet. Choosing a topic, narrowing the focus of the topic, compiling a preliminary bibliography of books, locating the books, compiling a preliminary bibliography of articles, locating periodicals, and available library research facilities within the New York metropolitan area are among the topics covered. A list of hints for effective research is also included. Appended to the text are a sample time/place research chart, a list of phone numbers for research libraries in New York City, a list of City University of New York (CUNY) libraries, a guide to the availability of research materials in New York City public libraries, and a guide to the availability of criminal justice indexes in New York City public libraries and in the CUNY library system. (JL)

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AN APPROACH TO LIBRARY RESEARCH FOR THE PART-TIME UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT

by

Marilyn Lutzker

John Jay College of Criminal Justice
Library
New York City, New York

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AN APPROACH TO LIBRARY RESEARCH FOR THE PART-TIME

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT

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An Approach to Library Research for the Part-Time Undergraduate Student

(A) INTRODUCTION

Part-time students face special problems when undertaking library research. This guide suggests ways to make the best use of your available time by utilizing the library resources of the city as a whole as well as those of your own college. It assumes that you have already had some basic instruction in library research, and will show you how to adapt the research procedures you have learned to your specific time/location problems.

> IF YOU HAVE NOT HAD ANY BASIC INSTRUCTION IN LIBRARY TECHNIQUES, we suggest that you take the individual CASSETTE TAPE TOUR of THE LIBRARY. It requires about a half-hour and can be taken whenever the Library is open.

(B) THE PART-TIME PROBLEM

The problem facing people with no time to do library research is frequently not "no" time, but either time in periods which seem too short for effective use, or a total mismatch between available time and library hours. The key to doing research for students with such problems is to learn a method for putting odd hours, occurring at inconvenient times and places, to productive use.

The following "Research Strategy for Part-Time Students" suggests such a method.

(C) RESEARCH STRATEGY FOR PART-TIME STUDENTS

The basis of this strategy is to DIVIDE YOUR RESEARCH PROJECT INTO AS MANY SMALL COMPONENTS AS POSSIBLE. View your paper, not as a large project which must be done in one place, but as several small, semi-independent projects which, with some imagination, can be done in a variety of places at your convenience.

As a part-time student your first step when undertaking a research project should be to define your own personal time/place problems. Be specific and realistic about the time you will be able to devote to your project. Look over the next section in this guide titled "Libraries Available To You" and think about possible places to do at least part of your research. Consider some of the following: Do you have time at lunch hour? Is there a library near where you work? Do you have access to a telephone for a while during the day? (We will explain this later). Do you pass a public library branch (even a small one) on the way home? Do you live near another CUNY school?

If you can possibly get an early start on your paper, you will face less pressure, probably do a better job, and be able to take advantage of two helpful but slow services: Free interchange of photocopies (see page 9), and CUNY "Limited Open Access" (see page 13).

Look at the time/place chart on page 11. If, after you have read the rest of this guide, you fill out the chart it will help you analyze your specific needs, and outline some solutions.

LIBRARIES AVAILABLE TO YOU

John Jay. If possible, this is the best place for you to work. Expert help is available to you in all phases of your research, and the collection is geared to our curriculum.

CUNY. You are entitled to on-site use of the materials in all CUNY libraries except the Graduate Center. In addition, you may borrow books from all CUNY libraries except Hostos and the Graduate Center, if you have a John Jay I.D. with a current validation sticker.

Public Libraries. If you live, work, or go to school anywhere in New York City, you can get a borrower's card for any or all of the public library systems: New York Public Library (including the Bronx and Staten Island), Brooklyn Public Library and Queens Borough Public Library.

Central Libraries of each public library system are true research libraries and have extensive collections of books periodicals, and periodical indexes. Although the size and arrangement of these libraries sometimes makes them confusing to use, their librarians are very helpful.

Regional Reference Centers are small research libraries which have been established to serve specific areas of each borough. Their resources are more limited than those of the Central Libraries but far more extensive than neighborhood branch libraries. If you live or work near one of them, take advantage of it.

Local Public Libraries vary in size and their collections reflect the interests of the population in the surrounding area. All branches have material dealing with popular hobbies, current political problems, general American history and literature, and popular psychology. If your neighborhood is concerned with school desegregation or community control you will most likely find that reflected in the public library; similarly, community ethnic patterns will be reflected in the library's collection.

(D) CHOOSING A TOPIC

This is where it all begins. Sometimes you have no choice; other times you have no limits. If there is any choice available to you, try to select a topic with a view to where you will be doing most of your research.

If you are given a free choice of topics and you want to do most of your research at a local public library, it would be best to choose a topic of almost universal concern or popularity, (for example: a current political issue, Women's rights, Child Development, Tropical Fish, Chess, Raising House Plants). If you have to (or want to choose a topic of less general interest

then plan to use a regional reference center, central library, or college library. If your topic is related to police science or criminal justice, the John Jay Library is clearly the best place to work.

(E) THE MINI-PROJECTS

The next section of this booklet is devoted to a detailed explanation of the five basic mini-projects into which a research paper can be divided. The nature of your topic determines which steps you will use, but regardless of your topic or your choice of library, dividing your research into small, individual components makes more efficient use of your time.

MINI-PROJECT (1) NARROWING YOUR TOPIC

Having chosen (or been assigned) your general subject, the first mini-project in your research plan will be to isolate those aspects of your topic on which you want to concentrate. The smaller and more specific the area you select, the less reading you will have to do to locate the precise information you need.

One of the best ways to narrow your subject is to begin with the kind of overview presented in an encyclopedia article. Either a specialized encyclopedia (such as the Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, or Encyclopedia of Education), or a general encycolpedia (such as the Britannica, Americana, or Collier's) can be used for this purpose. Encyclopedias can be found at all branch libraries; you man even have one at home.

Another way to narrow your topic (and this is one you can do at home, or in the subway) is to study carefully the table of contents of your textbook, or other general books on the subject. Individual chapters or subdivisions within a chapter might suggest suitable subjects for you to expand upon.

If weekends or late nights at home form the bulk of your availabile time, select an aspect of your subject that is not dependent on reference books (for example, if Prostitution is the subject, an historical approach would be

preferable to an analysis of current state legislation). The reverse is true if your only access to peace and quiet is a Saturday at the library. In this latter instance, a subject geared to material in non-circulating reference books and periodicals will avoid frustration.

If you are planning to use the John Jay Library, please note that although we have an extensive collection, we do not have multiple copies of most books, so unless you want to do most of your criminal justice research in periodicals (which is not a bad idea), try to avoid the most popular topics. The reference librarians can generally give you a good idea of what the current "hot" topics are.

Having decided on your topic with a view to your own problems, you will start your search for information. Here again, because you have specific problems of time and location, we continue to emphasize that you should view the job as a series of small separate tasks rather than one large one. If you (or your professor) have decided that you will need to use both books and articles, you can separate that search into its two component parts; then each of these two parts can be further divided into the compiling of a preliminary bibliography and the actual locating of the material.

MINI-PROJECT (2) Compiling a preliminary bibliography of books

There are several ways to gather titles for your preliminary bibliography of books.

Library Card Catalog: This is obviously the best and fastest procedure because it enables you to do all the work in the same place although not necessarily at the same time. IF YOU HAVE TROUBLE USING THE CARD CATALOG, ASK THE LIBRARIAN FOR HELP. Subject headings and call numbers are not the same in every library. Don't limit your bibliography to books that are immediately available; select appropriate titles and defer the location problem for the moment.

Encyclopedia article: If you read an article in an encyclopedia to help get an overview of your topic, see if there is a bibliography at the end of the article. These generally include standard books in the field and can be put on your preliminary bibliography.

Textbook: Your textbook, or any other book you may already have located, might have a list of suggested additional reading. Add these titles to your preliminary bibliography. If the library in which you are working has only one book on your topic, use its bibliography to help you compile your own.

New York Public Library Book Catalog: Since 1971 the New York Public Library, rather than add more cards to its card catalog, has printed a book catalog which, like a card catalog, lists books by author, by title, and by subject. For books acquired since 1971 use the book catalog as you would a card catalog: Look up the subject in which you are interested, and you will find a list of books dealing with that subject. In addition, you will find a list of symbols showing which branches of the New York Public Library (including Mid-Manhattan) own those titles. Copies of this catalog can be found at John Jay, most CUNY libraries, the Main Libraries of Queens Borough Public and Brooklyn Public, and all branches of the New York Public Library system (including the Bronx and Staten Island).

MINI-PROJECT (3) Locating the Books

After putting together a preliminary bibliography, your next mini-project is to locate the books. This may involve more leg work than the previous two projects, but with a knowledge of the resources available to you, some judicious planning, and a few telephone calls, you should be able to locate enough of the books on your list to meet your needs.

PUBLIC LIBRARIES AND THEIR UNION CATALOGS. Public libraries really do offer some marvelous services. Each public library system has a Union Catalog which lists all the books owned by that system and tells in which branches you can locate a particular title. Union Catalogs are designed to answer

telephone inquiries. (Telephone numbers are on page 12).

Having compiled a list of desirable books, you can call the Union Catalog and ask which branches own those books. Generally, the branch library, if you telephone them, will tell you if the book is on the shelf, and will hold it for you until you can pick it up.

JOHN JAY COLLEGE. If there is a particular book which we own, and you cannot locate it on the shelf, talk to the circulation attendant. If the book has been charged out to someone else, we will put a "hold" on it and notify you by post card when it is returned.

OTHER CUNY COLLEGES. You are free to use any other CUNY library except the Graduate Center, and can borrow from any of them except the Graduate Center and Hostos. (You must have a currently valid John Jay I.D.)

MINI-PROJECT (4) Compiling a priliminary bibliography of articles

Even with rather lavish use of photocopy machines, the utilization of periodical literature in research can be very time consuming. Here again, we are suggesting that if you break the task down into smaller separate components you will be able to make use of periods of time which you would otherwise not be able to use for your research. As with books, the first task will be to prepare a preliminary bibliography.

Periodical indexes are the means of locating articles on specific subjects. These indexes run from The Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature, a guide to the contents of about 200 popular magazines, to highly specialized indexes which

cover very narrow subject fields. All the indexes have a subject approach, but the subject headings may vary considerably from one index to another, even though covering the same or similar subject areas. Some indexes provide only the information necessary to locate the article, while others also give a summary of the article.

Choosing the best index is important. Consult the John Jay College Library's booklet Forge Ahead; a Guide to the Indexes and Abstracts in the Library for suggestions, or talk to a reference librarian.

Fortunately periodical indexes are widely available. The Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature, the most popular of all periodical indexes, is in almost every public library branch. The more specialized indexes, such as Public Affairs Information Service (PAIS) and Psychological Abstracts are in the Borough Research Centers and in most CUNY branches. The New York Times Index is also widely available. It is in every CUNY library and many public library branches. For criminal justice material your best bet is still John Jay.

More specific information on library holdings of some of these indexes appears on the chart on pages 14-17.

MINI-PROJECT (5) Locating the Periodicals

With your preliminary bibliography of newspaper and magazine articles completed you are now ready to undertake your next mini-project: locating the items on your list.

It is hard to predict which libraries will have which magazines, but you can expect that small branch libraries will have very few titles; larger public libraries will have recent years of the most popular magazines; and college libraries and central libraries of each public library system will have extensive magazine collections. If you need magazines dealing with police science/criminal justice you will find it best to use the John Jay Library.

Libraries do not generally circulate magazines, but almost every one has a photocopy machine.

Periodical Holding Lists. Magazines (also called periodicals or serials, or journals) are frequently not listed in a library's card catalog. It is often necessary to ask the librarian for the Periodical Holding List to see which magazines are owned by the library you are working in. College libraries and some public libraries will also have periodical holding lists from other libraries. (John Jay has a good collection of these.)

Free Interchange of Photocopies. If you are using the John Jay Library and we do not own the magazine you need, we can request a free copy for you from another library in the area. However, you cannot expect delivery of your free copy in less than 2 - 3 weeks. Requests must be kept to a reasonable number.

That was the last of your mini-projects. You should now have sufficient information to start writing your paper. As you proceed, if you find that there are still some specific statistics, dates or other facts that you are lacking, you might be able to find them in reference books. Discuss the problem with the reference librarian at John Jay, at another CUNY school, or at any of the public library research centers.

(F) SUMMARY

Here, in outline form, is a summary of the steps discussed in this "Research Strategy for Part-Time Students." The essential factors in the strategy are to break your research into small segments, and to make the best use of whatever library facilities in the city are most convenient for you.

- Define your own time/location problem
- Choose a topic taking into consideration where and when you will be doing your research
- Narrow your topic
- Compile a preliminary bibliography of books
- Locate the books
- Compile a preliminary bibliography of articles
- Locate the articles

(G) SPECIAL HINTS

These hints can be real time and temper savers:

(1) Take full advantage of the reference librarians in every library you use. Although they may appear to be busy with other things, their main job is to help people doing research, and they are usually pleased to do so.

(2) Always call ahead to check library hours; they change frequently.

(3) If you intend to use a photocopy machine at a library which has only one, call ahead to be sure it is working.

(4) Not every library with microfilm has microfilm printers. If you need these, call and check.

(5) Carry your own change for the copy machines; it is faster. Most places charge 10¢, but some charge 25¢.

(6) Save money by not photocopying the entire article. A quick scan will usually tell you that you won't use most of it anyway.

(7) If you buy magazines or books in your professional field, they are tax deductible.

(8) Take careful notes. People lose a lot of time retracing their steps because they did not get all the bibliographic information the first time (or they can't quite read their own handwriting).

APPENDIX I

SAMPLE INDIVIDUAL TIME/PLACE RESEARCH CHART

Hours Available?	Where will I be?	Is there a convenient open Library?	What part of the project can be done there?

APPENDIX II

UNION CATALOGS
AND OTHER USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Library	Telephone	Hours
New York Public Library Union Catalog (includes Bronx and Richmond)	790-6234	M - F, 9-5:30
Brooklyn Public Library Union Catalog	780-7790	M - F, 9-4:30
Queens Borough Public Library Union Catalog (ask for Public Catalog)	990-0700	M - F, 10-9 Sat. 10-5
John Jay College Library	489-5168	M - Th, 9-9 F, 9-5 S, 11-4

Public and College Libraries convenient for you:

ALWAYS CALL AHEAD
TO CHECK HOURS

APPENDIX III

CUNY COLLEGES

Following is a list of CUNY college libraries which will allow you both on-site use, and borrowing privileges. Some of them will check the catalog to see if they own specific items, when they are not too busy. (Best time for this is between nine and ten in the morning.)

(1) Always check ahead about hours; all the senior colleges, and some of the community colleges have some weekend hours.

(2) Be sure to have your John Jay I.D., validated for the current semester.

(3) You are responsible for any materials borrowed from another CUNY branch; they will notify us if the materials are not returned promptly.

Baruch College (725-3112)
Borough of Manhattan Community College (262-3530)
Bronx Community College (220-6450)
Brooklyn College (780-5336)
City College (690-4271)
College of Staten Island (390-7695)
Hunter College (360-5515)
Kingsborough Community College (934-5632)
La Guardia Community College (626-5518)
Medgar Evers College (735-1851)
New York City Community College (643-5240)
Queens College (520-7256)
Queensborough Community College (631-6262)
York College (969-4015)

ALWAYS CALL AHEAD TO CHECK HOURS

AVAILABILITY OF SELECTED MATERIALS IN PUBLIC LIBRARY BRANCHES
IN NEW YORK CITY

(Years indicate earliest volume at each location. THE CENTRAL REFERENCE LIBRARY OF EACH SYSTEM HAS COMPLETE RUNS OF ALL TITLES. Smaller branches which are not listed here may have a few years of the Reader's Guide and the New York Times Index.)

	Library	Readers' Guides	NY Times Index	NY Times (microfilm)	Psych.Abs.	PAIS
QUEENS	Bayside (BA 9-1834)	YES '65-	YES '39-	NO	NO	YES '70-
	Broadway (721-2462)	YES '29-	YES '39-	YES '39-	YES '78-	YES '74-
	Flushing (HI 5-0800)	YES '71-	YES '30-	YES '30-	NO	YES '71-
	Forest Hills (BO 8-7934)	YES '55-	YES '39-	YES '39-	NO	NO
	Jackson Hts. (TW 9-2500)	YES '32-	YES '29-	YES '29-	YES '75-	NO
	Laurelton (LA 8-2822)	YES '59-	YES '39-	YES '39-	NO	NO
	Lefferts (VI 3-5950)	YES '67-	YES -39'	YES '39-	NO	NO
	Peninsula (634-0101)	YES '57-	NO	NO	YES '72-	YES '72-
	Queens Village (SP 6-6800)	YES '71-	YES '39-	YES '39-	NO	NO
	Ridgewood (VA 1-4770)	YES '59-	YES '39-	YES '39-	NO	NO
BRONX	Bronx Reference (220-6576)	YES '00-	YES 1851-	YES 1851-	YES '49-	YES '64-
	Francis Martin (295-5287)	YES '68-	NO	NO	NO	NO
	Grand Concourse (872-3444)	YES '57-	NO	YES '75-	NO	NO
	Hunt's Point (329-2996)	YES '61-	NO	YES '76-	NO	NO
	Westchester Square (863-0436)	YES '73-	NO	NO	NO	NO

APPENDIX IV (b)

	Library	Readers' Guide	NY Times Index	NY Times (microfilm)	Psych.Abs.	PAIS
BROOKLYN	Bay Ridge (SH 8-3042)	YES '71-	YES '73-	YES '73-	NO	NO
	Borough Park (GE 5-3375)	YES '71-	YES '71-	YES '71-	NO	NO
in same place	Brooklyn Hts. (780-7789)	YES '71-	NO	NO	YES '71-	NO
	Business Lib. (780-7800)	NO	YES 1851-	YES 1851-	NO	YES '50-
	DeKalb (452-5678)	YES '65-	NO	NO	NO	NO
	Kings Bay (DE 2-5656)	YES '70-	YES '72-	YES '70-	NO	NO
	Kings Highway (ES 5-3037)	YES '66-	YES '60-	YES '60-	YES '66-	NO
	New Lots (NI 9-3700)	YES '65-	NO	NO	NO	NO
	New Utrecht (BE 6-4086)	YES '55-	YES '63-	YES '63-	YES '65-	NO
	Williamsburgh (782-4600)	YES '69-	NO	NO	NO	NO
STATEN ISLAND	New Dorp (351-2977)	YES '51-	YES '71-	YES '70-	NO	NO
	St. George (442-8560)	YES '10-	YES 1851-	YES 1851-	YES '59-	YES '75

APPENDIX IV (c)

	Library	Readers' Guide	NY Times Index	NY Times (microfilm)	Psych.Abs.	PAIS
MANHATTAN	Bloomingdale (222-8030)	YES current only	NO	NO	NO	NO
	Countee Cullen (281-0700)	YES '71-	NO	NO	NO	NO
	Fort Wash. (927-3533)	YES '45-	NO	NO	NO	NO
	Inwood (942-2445)	YES '53-	NO	NO	NO	NO
	Jefferson Market (243-4334)	YES '37-	YES '58-	YES '58	NO	NO
	Ninety-Sixth St. (289-0908)	YES '37-	NO	NO	NO	NO
	St. Agnes (877-4380)	YES '73-	NO	NO	NO	NO
	Donnell (621-0618)	YES '32-	YES '45-	YES '45-	NO	NO
	Mid-Manhattan (790-6574)	YES '00-	YES 1851-	YES 1851-	YES '27-	YES '15-

APPENDIX V

AVAILBILITY OF PERIODICAL INDEXES AND ABSTRACTS IN THE FIELD OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE IN THE PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEMS, AND IN CUNY

	Criminology & Penology Abstracts	Police Science Abstracts	Crimianl Justice Abstracts	Criminal Justice Periodical Index
Queens Borough Public Library Central Research Library, Jamaica	Yes, '69-	Yes, '73-	No	No
Brooklyn Public Library, Central Research Library, Grand Army Plaza	Yes, '68-	Yes, '73-	Yes, '72-	No
New York Public Library Mid-Manhattan Branch	No	No	Yes, '77-	No
New York Public Library Donnell Branch	No	No	No	No
Baruch College	No	No	No	No
Brooklyn College	Yes, '61-	No	Yes, '71-	No
City College	Yes, '61-	No	No	No
Hunter College	No	No	Yes, '71-	No
John Jay College	Yes, '61-	Yes, '73-	Yes, '71-	Yes, '75
Lehman College	No	No	No	No
Queens College	No	No	No	No